

West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission Winter, 2018 Activities

Since our February 12, 2018 meeting will be primarily to discuss a strategic plan for the Commission, following are various pedestrian and bicycle related activities which have been going on recently or which are scheduled for the near future:

1. On January 10, 2018, I met with Helen Rubino-Turco and Lisa Daly, who is the P.E. director for elementary and middle schools on West Hartford. Lisa hopes to start a bike education program at Sedgwick middle school for eighth graders in the near future. She is reluctant to start a bike education program in the elementary schools because she would want to do it across the board and there are 11 elementary schools in town. She also is concerned about safety and diversity. She feels that we would need to provide bikes for all of the students and would need to have a place to store the bikes and would need to maintain the bikes. I mentioned to her that most schools across the country implement the bike education program in the fourth grade.
2. I'm January 24, 2018 I traveled to Windsor Locks to meet with the South Windsor Walk and Wheel Ways organization. They have successfully implemented a bicycle education program in the fourth grade curriculum. They have partnered with the South Windsor Parks and Recreation Department and the South Windsor Foundation. They have purchased 24 bicycles in various sizes together with a van to get the bicycles from school to school. They provided us with a detailed PowerPoint presentation of their program. The program very impressive. It not only includes rules of the road, but also bicycle repair and maintenance, safety measures and much more.
3. On January 24, 2018, I went to the Community Planning and Physical Services Committee meeting. At the meeting, the committee discussed the N. Main St., Rd. diet. It was clear from the committee meeting that the sentiment is changing in town and the Town Manager is seriously considering this proposal. The town is going to approach the same consultant that did the feasibility study and ask them to expand their study to address the potential spillover from N. Main St. to Trout Brook Dr., Mountain Road and the N. Main St. feeder streets. This matter will be on the agenda at the next committee meeting, which is scheduled for February 21, 2018 at 8am. At the January 24 meeting, the town presented the complete streets annual report. I will have copies of that annual report

available at the February 12, 2018 meeting of the West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission.

4. It looks like we are full speed ahead for the West Hartford signed neighborhood bike routes. The town will be ordering the signs shortly. The Blue Route will be 8.0 miles, the Orange Route will be 5.9 miles and the Green Route will be 4.2 miles. The first route should be completed this Spring.
5. I attended the Mayor's State of the Town meeting on Friday, January 26. I was fortunate to be sitting at a table with the owner of the Delamar hotel. I brought up the subject of a bike share program and he is very interested in starting a program at the hotel. I will be meeting with him within the next few weeks to discuss the program.
6. I met with representatives of the West Hartford Land Trust on Tuesday, January 16, 2018. We discussed the possibility of the Land Trust getting involved with the purchase of some of the University of Connecticut property on the east side of the Trout Brook Drive. We talked about building a park there. This would coordinate quite well with the baseball fields on the east side of the brook but it would also work well with the Trout Brook Trail which terminates at the intersection of Asylum Avenue in Trout Brook Drive.
7. The North American Handmade Bicycle Show will be held at the Connecticut Convention Center from February 16 to February 18.
8. We will be putting on a tire changing and tube repair program at the How To Festival in the town of West Hartford on Saturday, March 24, 2018. We will be looking for volunteers to help staff the booth and participate in the program during the day.
9. The Bike Walk Connecticut Bike Walk Summit and Technical Training Program will be held on Friday, April 6, 2018 at the Lyceum in Hartford. For more details, log onto their website at bikewalkct@bikewalkct.org.
10. We have renewed our club insurance for 2018. The cost was \$273.
11. The town is looking for ideas on how to spend approximately \$875,000 in United States Department of Housing and Urban Development grant money and will hold two public hearings in February. The funds can be used to refurbish roads, beautifying the area or provide loans to people on fixed or limited incomes. The first public hearing will be on February 27 from 6 to 7 PM in room 110 of the Elmwood Community Center. The second hearing will be on February 28 from 5 to 6 PM in room 217 at the West Hartford Town Hall. If you have any ideas on how this money should be spent to support bicycling or pedestrian endeavors, please contact me.
12. The application for silver status will be filed with the League of American Cyclists within the next several weeks. It will take a few months for them to make a decision.

13. The Center Streets event is scheduled for Sunday, August 26, 2018. We are looking for sponsors to cover the cost of the event. If you know any individuals or organizations that may be willing to sponsor, email Ed Pawlak at ecosys88@gmail.com.

As you can see, there are a lot of exciting things going on in town related to bicycle and pedestrian issues. As with any volunteer organization, we need your help in order to make these things happen. If you are interested in assisting with any of the above endeavors, please email me.

Scott Franklin, Chair
West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission